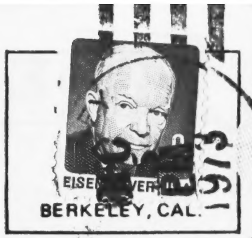
FROM: P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709 USA

DEC 17 REC'D

First Class

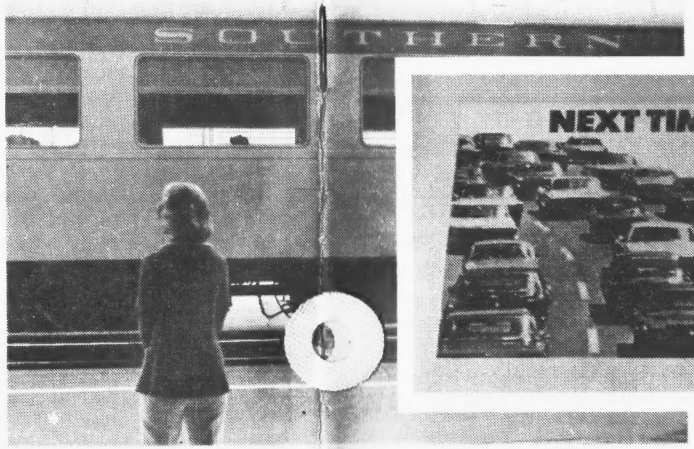
To:



RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

25¢

VOL. 3 NO. 23
FIRST ISSUE OF
DECEMBER 1973
#73



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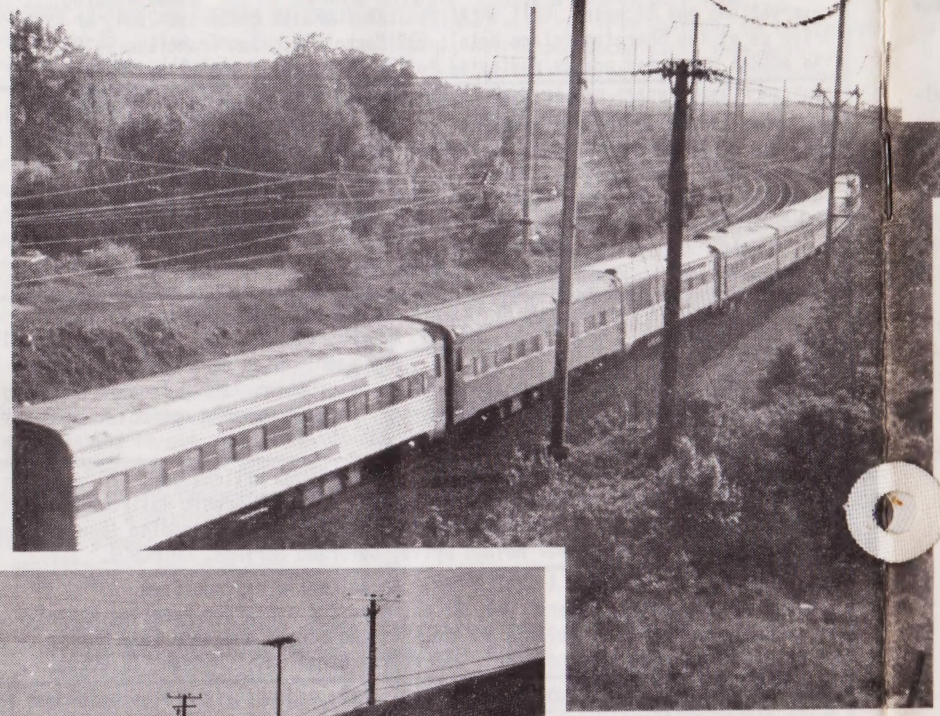
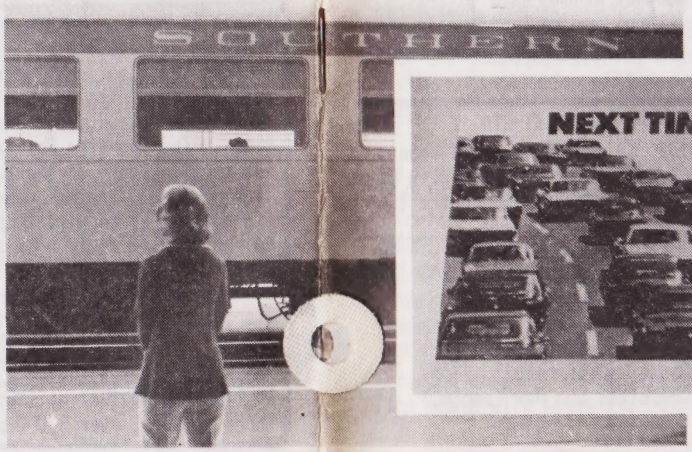




ON THE COVER:

A photo montage of scenes of heightening passenger train activity as the energy crisis moves the nation into a real renaissance of the rails. (Clockwise, starting at top rear cover) SILVER METEOR, Amtrak train 83 southbound thru Maryland on its way to Florida, photographed by Ken Maylath; SP workers spruce up the Truckee, CA station in preparation for a renewal of passenger service to the Sierra (photo by R. E. LeVart); an air of expectancy as the COAST STARLIGHT pulls into the Oakland depot; Amtrak's "The uncrowded freeway" poster adorns a station wall; waiting to board the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR; the southbound COAST STARLIGHT loads passengers at Oakland. Photos by Message Media, unless otherwise credited.

EDITORIAL

Again the typical lack of foresight and planning in the Federal Government is evident in the current energy crisis. Why does Washington seem unable to act until a growing problem reaches crisis proportions? Those whose job it is to make predictions long ago forecast that energy consumption must be cut back lest we run out of fuel, and that new sources of energy production must be explored. But with the eleventh-hour mentality that seems to prevail among our legislators and administrators, things were allowed to slip until we face a grave threat to our economy and our general sense of well-being. Our homes will be chilly, our lights dimmed, our transportation facilities badly strained, people out of work and scarcities of goods threatened.

Some good will come out of this, of course. Our transportation system may be on the way to a new balance, with a restoration of rail passenger and commuter service and a reduction in the unhealthful and dehumanizing excess of highway and air usage. But why does it take such a wrenching blow to the nation to get started seriously with these long-needed reforms? We would have had a serious energy problem even without the Arab oil embargo, but we couldn't seem to get moving toward a real solution without the stimulus of the Mideast developments. It's abundantly clear now that the nation needs a vast new fleet of railroad cars to handle the traffic that's sure to grow. Why couldn't the decision makers in Washington have foreseen this several years ago and taken steps then to get them on order? Amtrak has a few on order now, but it will be many months before they'll be ready for use. The disastrous decision by Amtrak and the administration early on to go slow and wait before ordering new equipment is now clearly seen as a wrong one, a decision that adds to the nation's transportation woes and to the threat of immobility.

Those of us who long ago appreciated the value of passenger trains now view the Administration's peopling of Amtrak with leaders who knew nothing about railroads and had little faith in the value of trains as another blunder that prevented Amtrak from growing properly in its first years and now adds to the transportation crisis. We trust that everyone at Amtrak now sees the light, as they should have in 1971, and will move forward with aggressive leadership to build up our rail passenger system to the level the people are calling for. If not, let some aggressive new leaders come forth and set Amtrak on the right track.

A SINCERE WISH FOR HAPPINESS IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON FROM THE PEOPLE AT RTN.

We're glad to be able to end the year on an upbeat note. This time of rapid change in the rail travel scene is exciting to be involved in. Things will be changing at an even faster pace in the coming year. We hope you'll be with us to share the fun of watching rail travel grow in 1974.

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 23 (Whole No. 73), First Issue of December, 1973. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709. Subscription $6.00 per year; single copy 25¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large; Kenneth Maylath, East Coast Correspondent; Peter Roehm, Northeastern Correspondent; Peter Putnam Bretz, Roving Correspondent; Doug Ellis, Staff Photographer. Scheduled mailing date for this issue: December 17, 1973. (Note: the last issue of 1973 will be mailed between Christmas and New Year's.)

THE ENERGY CRISIS DEEPENS

December second was a quiet, peaceful morning the likes of which we hadn't felt in the city for a long time. On the first weekend of voluntary Sunday gas station closing, people were clearly traveling less. The usual distant hum of the freeway was absent until well into the day. By the second Sunday of December, things were more nearly back to normal. Gas stations announced many Sunday openings, and auto travelers were again encouraged to pack their skis and head for the snowy mountains. To some, it was evident that only gasoline rationing would make a significant and equitable reduction in automobile usage.

Meanwhile, independent truckers in the East and Midwest blockaded highways in retaliation against the high price of diesel fuel, lower highway speed limits, and station closings. The Alaska Pipeline bill was passed, and each daily newspaper carried more items about citizen energy conservation. William E. Simon took over leadership of the newly created Federal Energy Agency, and former Colorado Governor John A. Love, the previous White House energy adviser, nosed out of a role, resigned in anger. Simon immediately advised that gasoline and oil prices would climb. The Administration still opposed rationing, though the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was given the go-ahead to print gasoline rationing cards. Rationing could not take effect earlier than March 1 because of the mechanics involved, and the Administration said it would have a decision by Jan. 1. The bill to reinstate daylight saving time has been passed and will be signed in time for the clock changeover to occur about Jan. 6. Congress is working on a proposed 55mph speed limit on the nation's highways. California has already passed such a bill.

In a strange snafu Dec. 12 the Administration announced in error that its fuel allocation program would mean a reduction of 25% in gasoline production effective Dec. 27, then some hours later acknowledged that a "typo" had occurred, and the correct figure was 5%. This would produce an overall 15% drop in available gasoline, however, compared to 1972.

Meanwhile, the whole nation appeared to be calling for a return of train service to local areas. There is no doubt that Amtrak will be deluged with requests to reinstate old runs and create new ones, and of course the rail corporation has just about purchased every useable railroad car already, and no new equipment for greatly augmented service will be available for about two years. There may be pressure on Congress to enact additional legislation to give Amtrak even more money for capital expenditures.

NORTHEAST RAIL BILL MOVING THROUGH CONGRESS

The Senate approved the bill to reorganize the bankrupt Northeastern railroads this week, and it now goes to a joint House-Senate compromise committee before final voting. The Senate version calls the Amtrak-like organization which would run the combined railroad the United Rail Corporation, while a Government National Railway Association will decide which routes to retain in the system.

AMTRAK'S WINTER SERVICE BEGINS

December 14 marked the start of Amtrak's winter service, with changes primarily on Florida trains, as outlined earlier in RTN. One major change occurred: the FLORIDIAN, which was to be changed to a day-night-day schedule between Chicago and Florida, will keep its present schedule, with some modification. Amtrak had planned to reroute the train thru Ocala to St. Petersburg, dropping Orlando as a stop. However, congressmen complained, and Amtrak agreed to the change. From Chicago, the schedule will be the same as before as far as Montgomery, where it will be speeded up, eliminating the long layover in Jacksonville. The last-minute change meant contacting many passengers who had made reservations on the originally-changed schedule and destroying some 80,000 newly printed timetables. Northbound, the train will leave St. Petersburg at 6pm.

canadian news letter

THE FUEL SHORTAGE--what long-term effect on Canada's passenger trains? At least some Canadians, like T. Smits of Thorold, are thinking this way, as expressed in a letter to the Toronto Globe & Mail: "Canada too is facing a shortage of oil, and the government encourages public transportation. But where are the fast and convenient trains? Where is a rapid train service between Toronto and Hamilton? Where is a fast train service to the Bruce peninsula? Or to Peterborough, Muskoka, Barrie? If my son has to go back to law school in Windsor from St. Catharines, there is no connecting train service, but I have to take him all the way to Dundas, where there is a station which has not even one attendant, just a telephone. Our railway firms have downgraded passenger services, or abandoned them, and for many people there is no other way than to travel by car. It is up to our government to take drastic action, take the rights away from those railway companies that looked after their own profits more than after the passenger, and create a national railway company that has the interest of the travelling public in mind, never mind the profit or deficit."

Meanwhile, columnist Ralph Surette writes: "...the era of the railway revival is at hand, and not a second too soon in Nova Scotia, where massive spending on superhighways of questionable utility has been proceeding apace. Revived interest in railways suddenly burst forth here this week (end of November), considering the efficiency with which railways use energy as compared to energy-guzzling highways."

What was happening in Nova Scotia, perhaps as a prototype for the rest of the country, was that residents of Windsor Junction were circulating petitions asking the Nova Scotia provincial government to inaugurate commuter train service into Halifax. They were outraged because existing Dominion Atlantic Railway runs into Halifax from Yarmouth operate thru Windsor Junction, but cannot pick up passengers because they operate on CN rails; and CN forbids the CP Rail subsidiary from doing passenger work on CN trackage. CN has refused to study commuter operations for the route.

A call for the construction of 90 miles of new track on the CN Montreal-Halifax line (the old Intercolonial Railway), came from John Cauley, retiring executive of the locomotive engineers' association of Canada. He said a new cutoff would reduce existing running time from 23 to 14 hours between the two points. Former Nova Scotia Premier G. I. Smith said that the impending oil crisis justified immediate work upgrading the Halifax line, which is now used daily by CN's SCOTIAN and OCEAN LIMITED passenger trains.

CANADIAN NATIONAL'S NEW fall-winter timetable contains few major changes. Amtrak's broken arrow logo appears at the bottom of the instructions page, an almost grudging admission on CN's part that Amtrak does exist for connections at Montreal and Vancouver. Several Prince Rupert-Jasper trains are extended to Saskatoon, Sask., during the December-January holiday period, with a few runs operating Jasper-Saskatoon only; in effect, a very slight revival of the old PANORAMA runs Jasper-Saskatoon. The Edmonton-Grande Centre RDC run, rumored as the next possible branch abandonment on the prairies, is still in the timetable (ride it while you can).

CN HAS CLOSED its Seattle passenger office. This isn't as much of a loss as it might seem, as the agency carried no ticket stock, and served mainly to give patrons a place to sit while staff contacted various CN reservation bureaux. Tickets had to be picked up at Vancouver, B.C.

CANADA'S TOURISM BUSINESS, reported to run about $4 billion a year, will suffer because of the energy crisis. Ontario's Director of Tourism, H. J. McGonigal, said that "more emphasis would be placed on group travel and mass transportation modes which are least restricted by shortages--back to trains and diesel motor coaches. ... The theme would be 'come and stay awhile, not come and tour.'"

A TORONTO TRANSIT staff study, leaked to a commissioner, has received wide publicity in the media. The report argues that streetcars are in most respects superior to monorails and magnetic levitation trains now proposed by the Provincial government for Toronto area service. As a result, some Metro Council leaders are trying to block expenditure of $829,000 by the Province to get such systems under construction. "Over the past several months, my doubts about GO-Urban kept getting worse and worse. Now, it looks to me like a disaster to which the Turbo is nothing by comparison. It's not GO-Urban, it's go nowhere as far as I'm concerned," said Toronto Alderman William Kilburn in announcing his opposition to the mag-lev. "...at least the Turbo ran now and then. This thing may not run at all." The staff report concludes that "A new generation of light duorail vehicles (streetcars) can meet all the requirements of any proposed intermediate rapid transit system."

A CP DAYLINER hit a gravel truck and derailed ten miles west of Trois-Rivieres, Quebec on Nov. 21. The truck driver was killed, and 13 of 18 aboard the train injured, one seriously.

A PHOTO OF an old railroad dining car appears in a current CP Air newspaper ad, with the caption: "We've spent nearly 100 years learning to make travel a pleasure." Does this mean that CP is now engaged in unlearning?

THE CANADIAN NATIONAL Auto-With-You plan for carrying cars from the East to Edmonton in the consist of the SUPER CONTINENTAL will no doubt be very popular next year with the continuing fuel shortage. CN says that the plan will be in effect again next summer, but early reservations are necessary. The train carries only six cars per trip. Cost is $188 for carrying the vehicle between Toronto and Edmonton, plus a minimum of two regular adult fares ($102 or $114 depending on the day). The service operates from mid-June to September, and does not include cost of meals.

A TRANSIT STRIKE began in Edmonton Nov. 29. With temperatures hovering near zero, 70,000 commuters found themselves without service, and a flood of automobiles clogged the city.

GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO has been running full-page newspaper ads concerning the fuel shortage, advising the public in part, "A basic question, whenever you reach for the car key...must you drive? Could you take a bus, or walk? Or ride with someone else? And do you really need such a large, powerful car?"

CITIZENS OF YELLOWKNIFE, Northwest Territories, have been serviced by a government-purchased ferry for the past two years. The vessel, the "Merv Hardie," cost almost $1 million. But apparently it was a lemon. In early November it lost power in one of its two engines and struck bottom--the third loss of engine power in two weeks. Air shipments across the Mackenzie River are thus needed two weeks ahead of schedule, and residents are finding prices of goods accordingly higher. Milk sells for 73¢ a quart instead of the normal 54¢.

CANADIAN FEDERAL TRANSPORT Minister Jean Marchand said his government is giving serious consideration to paying some of the costs of launching commuter train services in the Toronto area. Most existing service, including all GO-Transit commute trains, is sponsored by the Provincial Government. The Federal Government has been criticized for its reluctance to enter the public transit field. Most likely service to be undertaken in the near future is from downtown Toronto to Richmond Hill, 20 miles north. Other lines considered extend west to Streetsville, and northeast to Malvern and the proposed new Pickering airport site.

TORONTO'S SNAPPY GO-TRANSIT commuter service is now carrying 22,000 passengers daily, approximately a 40% increase since service began in 1967 along the CN Lakeshore route.

WITH THE OCTOBER time change, CN has improved its "corridor" service west from Toronto to London, Windsor and Sarnia. CN is advertising nine trips per day to London, but because of "fleeting" of some trips, there are actually about six departure times. Most mainline runs stick to the 5 cars/one locomotive format; while the Stratford-Kitchener "secondary" line is served mainly by RDC cars. In contrast, the formerly heavy Noon Rapido on the Montreal-Toronto run is often down to only 5 cars: baggage, 2 coaches, snack-coach and one club (parlour)--quite a decline from similar runs only a few years ago of 10-14 cars, including 8-10 coaches.

THAT NEW DEPARTURE time, 6:30am, of Amtrak's PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL southbound from Vancouver is already cutting heavily into traffic. Saturday morning of the long Thanksgiving weekend the P.I. carried only 22 passengers, way below the recent average loading. Eventually, the southbound P.I./COAST STARLIGHT run should operate one hour later. Rescheduling the eastbound SUPER CHIEF to 9:30pm from Los Angeles, and into Kansas City at 7:35am instead of 5:35am, would allow the coast trains to make reliable connections.

NEW TRANSPORT TERMINAL plans for Toronto were presented to city officials by Metro Centre Developments Ltd. Nov. 28. Building could start next summer, if approved. Replacing Union Station would be a $35 million terminal, with main railways moved southward. Proposed to be a hub of CN and CP, the Province's GO trains and controversial GO-Urban elevated vehicles, subway connection, and perhaps a bus terminal, the terminal would have a capacity of over 100,000 passengers at rush hour. The Great Hall of Union Station will be preserved for at least a year while the city council decides whether to retain it permanently.

CN'S SUPER CONTINENTAL has been slowed once again with the fall time change. ("Super" news remains creepy as the SUPER gets creepier.)

IN AN HISTORIC "first," Toronto's transit system commissioners have approved a resolution to re-introduce streetcar service on the Spadina line from Bloor to King Sts. This route had been converted to bus in 1948, amid some controversy, but most track and wire have remained for emergency and special use. Seventeen streetcars will replace the existing 26 diesel buses, which will be shifted to suburban runs. Total cost, including track work, reconditioning of streetcars, and construction of Clarence Loop, will run from $720,000 to $1.1 million. TTC chairman Karl Mallette, a strong streetcar supporter, said service will commence within two years.

A TURBO OMEN? With the new fall-winter CN timetable, the Afternoon Rapido trains between Montreal and Toronto operate with numbers 66 and 67, formerly reserved for TurboTrains. The Afternoon Rapidos have carried Nos. 64-65 throughout the history of Turbos since TurboTrains first appeared in the CN timetable in summer, 1967.

NEW SAN JOAQUIN TRAIN TO RUN ABOUT MARCH 1

While Congress was busy working over the Amtrak bill that was finally signed by President Nixon on Nov. 3, Amtrak was quietly proceeding to make ready the service thru California's San Joaquin Valley for which the bill provided previously-impounded funds. Amtrak was preparing a rail connection between SP and Santa Fe tracks at Port Chicago, CA to carry one train a day each way between Oakland and Bakersfield, with bus connections to San Francisco and from Bakersfield to Los Angeles. Trains will leave Oakland on SP as far as Port Chicago, where they take Santa Fe tracks for the rest of the route thru Stockton and Fresno to Bakersfield. American Pacific lines, which now handles Amtrak bus connections in the San Francisco area, has the contract for connecting service at each end of the valley route. Myron Humphrey, Amtrak's western regional sales manager, made the announcement Dec. 11, and said the new train should start running approximately March 1, 1974.

RAILROAD POST OFFICE should return if Congressman Stewart B. McKinney of Connecticut has his way. He's proposing a return of the rolling offices as an efficiency measure.

AMTRAK ON-TIME PERFORMANCE FIGURES FOR SUMMER AND FALL

	Per Cent On-Time			
Routes	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
Metroliners	42.9	51.4	72.6	73.9
TurboTrains	29.5	25.6	49.3	39.3
Turboliners				18.0
Short distance routes				
NY-Washington (conventional trains)	80.0	75.2	83.3	79.0
Boston-Washington	44.7	54.3	66.3	67.8
NY-Boston				
Shore Route	69.6	73.1	84.1	71.1
Inland Route	55.4	57.5	74.6	77.7
NY-Buffalo	50.3	63.9	69.0	72.3
Philadelphia-Harrisburg	53.5	67.8	71.6	82.4
Washington-Cumberland	77.4	71.0	66.7	51.6
Chicago-Carbondale	14.5	11.3	10.0	46.8
Chicago-Detroit	64.5	75.0	85.0	72.6
Chicago-Quincy	9.7	27.4	60.0	22.6
Milwaukee-St. Louis	39.5	35.5		
Chicago-St. Louis			38.3	57.7
Chicago-Milwaukee	88.7	66.1	64.0	55.2
Seattle-Portland	66.9	72.6	76.4	92.5
Los Angeles-San Diego	56.4	64.1	71.7	82.4
Total short distance:	60.2	63.1	70.8	73.3
Long distance routes				
NY-Chicago	0	0	1.7	3.2
NY-Florida	22.6	21.6	51.6	61.8
Boston-Florida	9.7	22.6	56.7	59.3
NY-Kansas City	0	1.6	5.0	4.8
Washington-St. Louis	3.7	0	0	3.6
Chicago-Washington	0	0	1.7	4.8
Cincinnati-Washington	3.2	0	18.3	24.2
Chicago-Newport News	8.2	8.1	13.3	19.4
Chicago-Florida	12.9	6.2	32.3	52.4
Chicago-New Orleans	0	0	0	9.7
Chicago-Houston	32.3	37.1	61.7	37.1
Chicago-Los Angeles	80.0	72.6	78.3	58.1
Chicago-Oakland	9.7	6.5	43.3	29.0
Chicago-Seattle	0	16.1	45.0	71.0
Chicago-Minneapolis	33.3	17.1	36.1	55.9
Ft. Worth-Laredo	54.2	44.4	34.6	61.5
Chicago-Spokane	0	37.0	60.0	75.0
New Orleans-Los Angeles	0	0	8.0	34.6
Seattle-Los Angeles	26.2	21.0	35.0	59.7
Washington-Montreal	32.8	40.3	80.0	71.0
NY-Harrisburg				50.0
Total long distance:	16.7	17.5	35.1	40.2
Grand total:	48.4	51.4	63.4	65.3

The above data include the latest reported by Amtrak. Note the general improvement in on-time performance as seasonal ridership declines in the fall. Our last listing of ridership data, for May and June, appeared in the First August issue.

NIXON REPORTED PREPARING TO RIDE TRAINS

President Nixon is planning to use trains where possible in his weekend travels away from Washington, according to wire service releases. It was rumored that the President would ride Amtrak's BLUE RIDGE Dec. 8 en route to his Camp David retreat in Maryland. However, he remained in Washington that weekend. Sources said that Amtrak personnel had been requested to spruce themselves up for the President's possible appearance that weekend.

An Amtrak spokesman, queried by RTN, referred questions to the White House. Presumably Nixon would use a specially prepared coach for his trips, and it would take some time to install communications apparatus in such a car before it would be used.

The use of trains would be to save jet fuel and to set an example to the nation of conserving energy during the fuel shortage.

Camp David is about 30 miles from Brunswick, on the BLUE RIDGE's Washington-Cumberland route. The route is one that the Administration recommended dropping from the Amtrak system earlier this year.

News sources said that Nixon might also use rails to reach his home in Key Biscayne, Florida, and his San Clemente abode on the SAN DIEGAN route in California.

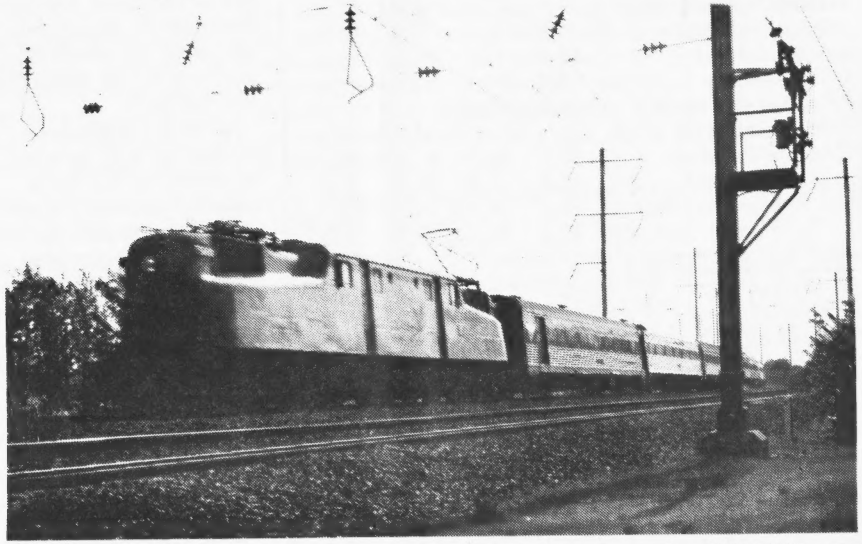
The club car on the 3-car BLUE RIDGE was reportedly moved to a side track Dec. 6 for inspection in case he rode.

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS: THE MONTREALER AT SPRINGFIELD

by William D. Sample

I first witnessed the reborn MONTREALER very early on a cold Thanksgiving morning, a few months after its second coming, in 1972. The place: the decrepit Springfield Union Station, a cold, lonely 50-year old structure known by some as the worst station on any Amtrak line.

As I entered the cavernous concourse, I saw a larger than usual crowd huddled together near the ticket office, many reading a sign that said "Closed--buy tickets on train." The train was due in about 5 minutes, and there were no railroad or Amtrak employees about to inform the crowd of thirty plus about the progress of the train. The crowd was sullen, understandably so, as the surroundings were anything but pleasant--no heat, forty-degree temperatures, no up-to-date information on the train's timekeeping, cracked and missing plaster on the walls and ceiling, plus dirt and water on the floor. At train time, a veteran Boston and Maine passenger trainman, who would be a member of the crew taking the train north to White River Junction,



Most Amtrak officials are said to have their favorite trains. The MONTREALER, it is reported, is the favorite of Harold Graham. Here it is headed for Canada last May 12, being whisked thru Middle River, Maryland, by a GG-1 electric in Amtrak colors. Photo by Ken Maylath.

Vermont, showed up and announced that the train would be an hour late. He advised passengers to buy their tickets from him, and then suggested nearby restaurants where they could find warmth and food until train time. At least somebody cared.

After what turned out to be a good hour and a half wait, word was spread by the Boston and Maine trainman that the train was finally "on the board" at the Springfield tower, and would soon be in. Meanwhile many passengers who had wandered off to nearby restaurants and bars had finally drifted back into the cold station as the actual train arrival time drew near. I then decided to negotiate the wet stairs to the platform level to observe the arrival, and it wasn't really that much colder outside. Others joined me, and a few minutes later, a cheer went up as a headlight swung around the corner and the train pulled into the station.

A train of this length hadn't been seen in Union Station for many a year--eleven cars! Three E8's drummed by, two in Amtrak colors, the other in the Penn Central's

funeral black. A baggage car, four sleepers (two leased from the Southern), a diner, and five coaches squealed to a stop and the grateful passengers hurried aboard into the welcome warmth of the cars. The locomotives were serviced, and then the train backed down to the crossover for the Boston and Maine and points north.....

One year went by, and I found myself back at the station. But was this the same station? Yes, it was in the same building, but that's where the resemblance ended. The new Amtrak facility took only a small part of the Union Station building, but what an improvement! It was well-lighted, clean, had vending machines that worked, and above all, there was an excellent young ticket agent who bent over backwards to help everyone. The ticket agent kept the passengers constantly informed on the progress of the train (it was only an hour late this year), advising, as did the B&M trainman in 1972, where to find nearby food and drink, and passing out Amtrak buttons to those who desired them (many did). Once, when an obnoxious local drunk staggered into the waiting room, the agent coolly called the police and went out to talk to the drunk until the men in blue arrived, keeping him from bothering the public. The drunk greeted the two peace officers like old friends--obviously they had met before! Soon all three were gone.

And then, the 1973 edition of the Thanksgiving MONTREALER rolled into town. On the point was a Canadian National FP9, a fairly rare sight in these parts, trailed by two Amtrak E8's of PC heritage, and followed by 14 cars! Amtrak had outshown even its previous Thanksgiving performance! Even more surprising, all but two of the 14 cars, which were for the most part ex-SCL and UP equipment, were wearing Amtrak colors. The last two cars, coaches, were in SCL markings.

The crowd came up the newly installed elevator, and the stairway, which was safely lighted and clean this year. The ticket agent fetched a baggage pushcart and went to the head end for a load of newspapers from the baggage-dormitory car, and passengers clambered aboard their respective sleepers and coaches.

Wanting a better overall view of the train, I then left the station, driving a few blocks west to the former New Haven Railroad coach yard site. There, the MONTREALER would back south, cross over to the connecting track for the Boston and Maine, and then the train would resume its northward journey to Canada's largest city.

It was a beautiful sight as I watched the long, shiny train back around the curve from the station. As the consist went slowly by my vantage point, I observed that the train appeared to be a good seven-eighths full. People slept in most of the coaches and sleepers and the diner was dark, but the lounge appeared still crowded and lively. The locomotives slowly came to a stop next to me and then started north. As the MONTREALER slowly slid by me, clattered over the crossing with the Boston and Albany line, and disappeared northbound onto B&M trackage, I wondered what I would see at the Springfield Amtrak Station early Thanksgiving morning, 1974.

GREYHOUND CLAIMS GREATER BUS EFFICIENCY

Using large ads, the Greyhound Corporation is presenting the claim that buses are 77% more efficient than trains in the use of fuel. The figures are: 40 passenger miles per gallon of fuel for autos, 48 for trains, 85 for buses. These are based upon a study, "Energy Intensiveness of Passenger and Freight Transport Modes: 1950-1970," performed at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and funded by the National Science Foundation. Ad copy reads: "For years we've been telling the American people about our leadership in passenger convenience and economy. Now, when every gallon of fuel really counts, it makes more sense than ever to leave the driving to Greyhound.

"Because our buses get more passenger miles per gallon of fuel--a lot more--than any other form of intercity transportation.

"A study supported by the National Science Foundation, an agency of the U.S. Government, proves we are most efficient."

As seen in the Wall Street Journal (Dec. 11), a giant ad spread across two half-pages pictures bar graphs running horizontally, at the head of each of which is a a vehicle: an automobile, a single diesel engine with prominent Amtrak logo and name, and a Greyhound bus. The bus is well out ahead of the other two.

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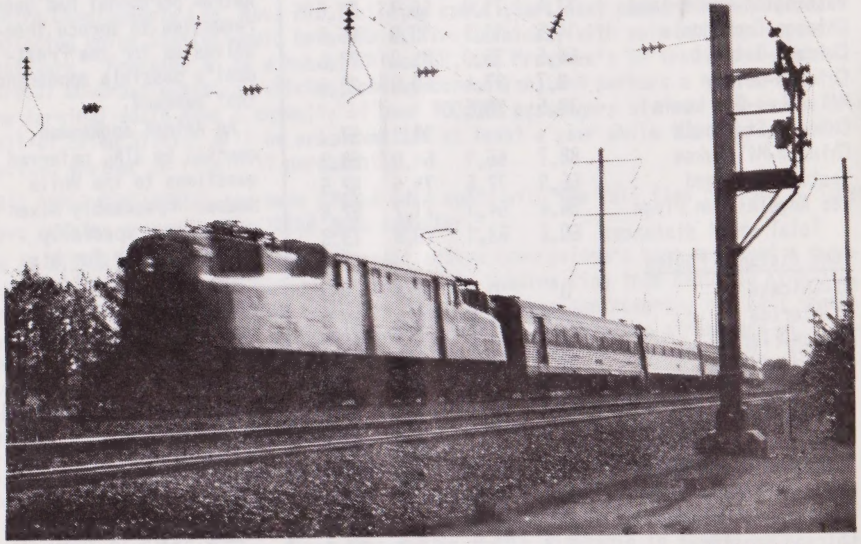

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A train of this length hadn't been seen in Union Station for many a year--eleven cars! Three E8's drummed by, two in Amtrak colors, the other in the Penn Central's

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Using large ads, the Greyhound Corporation is presenting the claim that buses are 77% more efficient than trains in the use of fuel. The figures are: 40 passenger miles per gallon of fuel for autos, 48 for trains, 85 for buses. These are based upon a study, "Energy Intensiveness of Passenger and Freight Transport Modes: 1950-1970," performed at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and funded by the National Science Foundation. Ad copy reads: "For years we've been telling the American people about our leadership in passenger convenience and economy. Now, when every gallon of fuel really counts, it makes more sense than ever to leave the driving to Greyhound.

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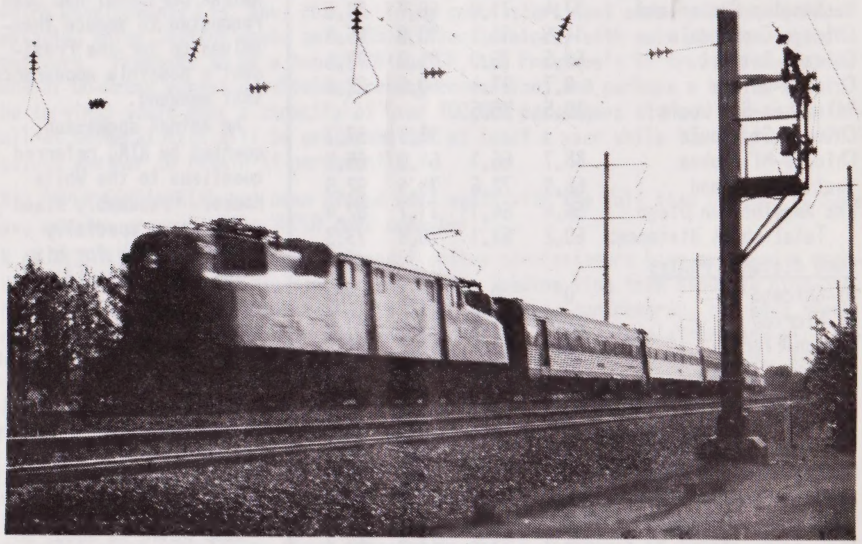

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NORTHWEST BY WEST (VIA PROMONTORY)

by Glenn Lee

Had the time been B.A. (Before Amtrak), I would have been in Ogden only a short time en route from Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to Seattle. As in 1970, on a previous journey, I would have searched out the Blue Pooch (or as Elvis would sing, "Y'ane nuthin' but a Hound Dog") for a trip to Pocatello, and thence via the CITY OF PORTLAND to the Northwest. The CITY OF PORTLAND was perhaps the least sung of the western dome trains, and I miss it a lot, but...

In the last days of October, 1973, I must find my way home westward from Ogden on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, and tonight I was plenty glad to see SFZ No. 5 late, for it meant time to purchase a roomette, check my bags, and get my bearings. SFZ finally showed at 11:27pm, down one hour seven minutes. She appeared with only two E units. The third, which had been the lead unit north from Denver, had struck a truckload of steel pipe at speed north of the mile-high city, incapacitating the diesel's running gear, injuring the engineer, and scaring hell out of many passengers, not to mention delaying No. 5 over two hours.

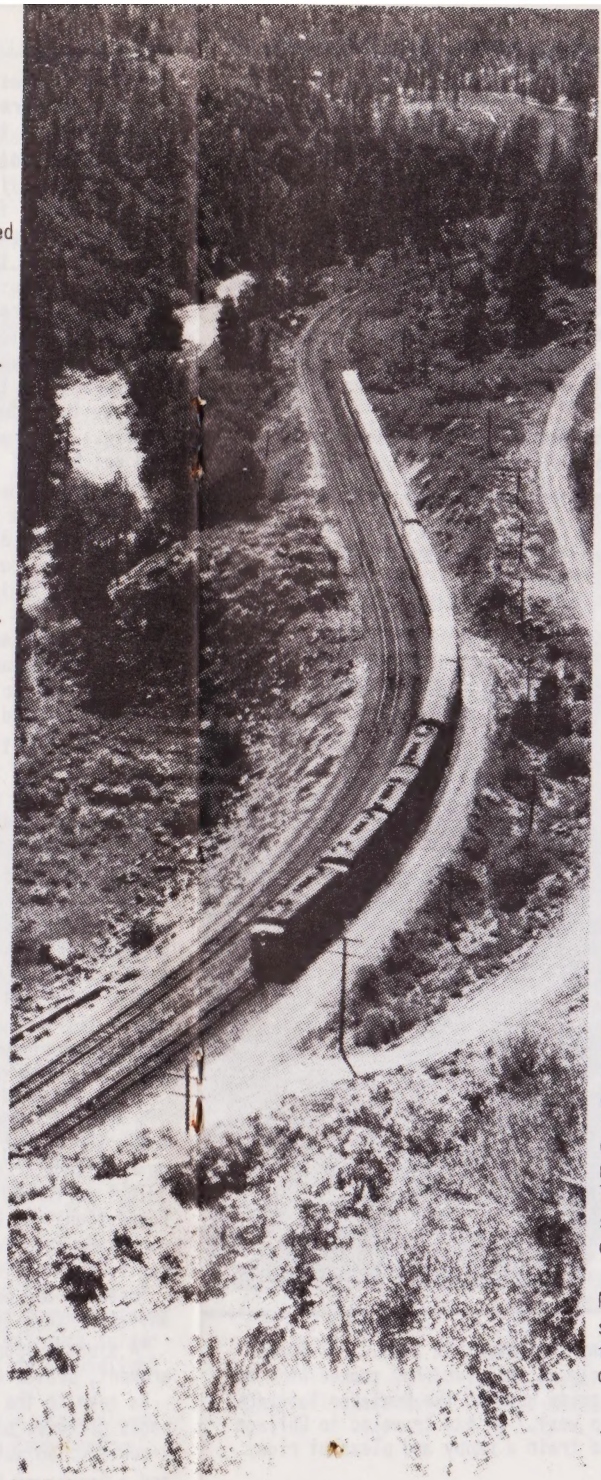
The damaged E unit had portions of her pilot cut away with welding torches, and then limped into Cheyenne to be withdrawn from service. No. 5 had finally gotten out of Cheyenne 2½ hours late, and had performed well into Ogden, making up over 80 of those lost minutes. To assist on the run west, SP 9502, high-horsepower experimental model of the SD-45 series, was attached at Ogden.

After watching the lashup, I retreated to my car, UP 1427, "Pacific Mist," checking over the train, which included 3 coaches, 3 sleepers, Burlington "Silver Diner," and SP dome 9374--a nice-looking consist. As I was very tired, I was really happy to plunge into the inviting confines of "Pacific Mist." After having had such a great day on the Rio Grande (see RTN, last issue), I would like to be able to report that all was well aboard "Pacific Mist." But alas, m'laddies, 'twas not to be. Ay, she had a flat wheel!

As we got underway, the tell-tale clump-clump could be heard, to rise and fall thru the night as train speed rose and fell. It wasn't a bad flat wheel, to be sure; and I was lucky, because I was toward the center of the car. Apparently the flat spot had been acquired when No. 5 had sliced thru the steel truck. My porter said the crash had produced a terrific jolt, and they were lucky not to have derailed. "Mist" had been the second car in the train, which is pulled backwards from Denver to Cheyenne.

I soon realized that I was very tired as we moved west from Ogden, and my mind entered that nether world where one becomes too tired to fall asleep. At one point as the train slowed, the flat wheel became a metronome to pace in my mind Eva Gabor singing "Scales and Arpeggios" from Disney's "Aristocats" film (a new low in nigh camp, I'm sure). As we drifted west toward the Great Salt Lake, the Travel Me said sternly: "You're not going to get any sleep for a while, so throw open the window shade and take a look."

I was glad that I did. We were passing Mile Post 758, Promontory Point. This is not the Promontory where the Gold Spike was



Amtrak photo

driven in 1869--that's north of the Great Salt Lake, and was on a line relegated to branch status when the Lucin Cutoff over the Lake was opened in the early 1900s. It disappeared altogether in 1942 when the original line was torn up to make scrap for World War II.

Today's Promontory is just a small phone shack, but the name mentally prepares one for the breath-taking crossing of the Great Salt Lake. Tonight, after midnight, I was held spellbound by millions of stars, covering the sky brilliantly from horizon to horizon, perhaps making up for the earlier darkness I had experienced cresting Soldier Summit on the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR. As we hit the reverse curve leading onto the "new" Salt Lake Fill, I could see Sirius, the Dog Star, rising under Orion, brightest star in the northern hemisphere, shining more brightly than I have ever seen it in my many years of star gazing. So bright, in fact, that it cast a moon-like reflection across the lake to the southeastern shore.

We rolled at high speed across the new fill, floating what seemed like only inches above the lake, suspended between an indistinguishable earth below and the undefinable heavens above. I could gradually make out the old Salt Lake trestle south of us, on which train speeds are now cut to 20mph, as it is still fully operable. In the late 1950s, when the Salt Lake fill was being built, sections of fill would collapse and sink without warning. Portions of fill shifted in the August, 1962 Logan, Utah earthquake, and the railroad is prudent in keeping the old trestle handy.

I felt myself gradually being overcome with emotion, whirling thru the brilliantly crystal-clear night, across the almost limitless desert waterscape. How many others on the train were experiencing this thrill, I wondered? Then, just about an hour west from Ogden, we went into the left-trending reverse curve, announcing the end of the big fill, and in a few minutes were back on "solid ground" at Lakeside, ready to speed across the desert wastes. "Isn't this a wonderful land?" I thought to myself. "Aren't we lucky to be fortunate enough to see it this way, even in the dead of night?" I could hear Arlo Guthrie singing: "This land is your land..." as I finally dropped off to sleep, having had true travelers' emotional experience, the flat wheel notwithstanding.

The dawn came late for me, thankfully. "Pacific Mist had been chilly thru the night because of three steam leaks between it and the power units. But I took advantage of an old travelers' trick: I put my coat between my sleeping car blankets, and kept snug

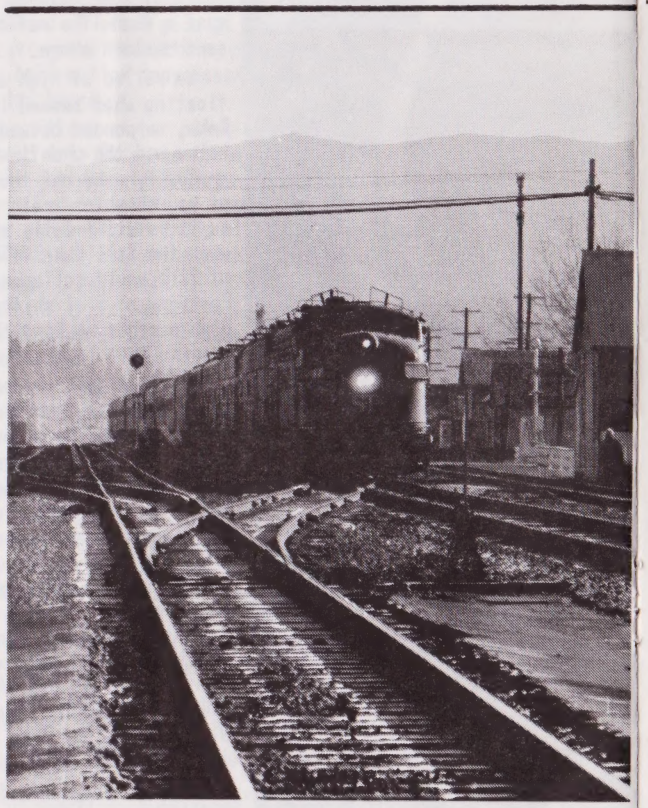
The SFZ curves thru the Truckee River Canyon between Reno and Truckee.

all night. The coat practically never rolls off the bed if it's between the blankets.

"Reno. Reno on your right. Coming into Reno" said the porter, rapping on my door. The SFZ stops right in the middle of downtown Reno, and I watched for a few moments before getting dressed. As a somewhat tight Scot, with some Calvinist-Puritan leanings, I've never really approved much of Reno and the 24-hour gambling palaces, and tend to consider Reno as "Gomorrah West," but even in the morning the hustle and bustle are intriguing.

Soon we are plunging thru the great reverse curves of the Truckee River Canyon, past Verdi, Floriston and Boca. We're 90 minutes late now, having lost some time during the night. A few cottonwoods are still fluttering last-gasp flags of autumn yellow. The day is ripe and clear and no one on SFZ cares about the schedule at all. The new stop at Truckee takes all of 30 seconds, and SFZ plunges west toward Donner with enthusiastic vigor. SP 9502, placed on the point at Ogden, had been replaced with F unit 6451 at Sparks, but our 9-car SFZ is still "overpowered" and we roll around the Stanford Curve and up to Donner in jig time.

The westbound main at Donner is the old, original main line, and offers stunning views of Donner Lake, some 1200 feet below, as the train slows to thread thru the snowsheds toward the short Norden summit tunnel. One SP patron told me she had actually been momentarily terrified by this view, but the passengers in SFZ's dome car were eating it up, to the last L.O.L. It's a much better view than from the eastbound main.



It was all-vacation lazing as No. 5 dropped down thru the high country to Emigrant Gap. At 11:23am we rolled thru Emigrant Gap, the dividing line separating the high country along the Yuba River from the forested zones above the American River. Autumn was in full progress from here to Colfax, with each tree outdoing the others in luminescent shades of yellows and reds. Even the oldtimers in the dome crowd said they had seldom seen anything like it.

At 12:35pm we passed the eastbound SFZ below Colfax, and after that, a trip to the diner for lunch. Presto! A full luncheon menu, something that had been missing on my eastbound SFZ trip. And good food too! Across from me at lunch was an 18-year old recruit, who had scored high on Army induction tests. He was en route from his Florida home to the Monterey language school at Fort Ord, Calif. This was his first trip west. He had traveled to Chicago on Amtrak's FLORIDIAN, and found that much-maligned train a happy and pleasant ride.

No complaints. This morning, out of Reno, he had seen the first snow of his life, and was animated. "I think I'm in love with California," he proclaimed. That is, until we got to the low brush around Loomis, east of Roseville, where the Sierra block meets the valley floor. "S--t, this looks like Florida," he said with disgust.

We pulled into Sacramento at 2:15pm and left at 2:30, 90 minutes down. At Sacramento, my porter showed me the steam leaks that had kept us cold the night before: one under the baggage-dorm car; a second under the dome; a third under "Pacific Mist;" and a fourth between "Pacific Mist" and the last car, "Pacific Cape." We asked car-knockers clear across the country to do something about this, said the porter, "but they all look at it and just walk away. No wonder we don't get no heat."

But it didn't matter in California. It was over 80° in Sacramento as we headed west, and things were reasonably cool. As we passed Suisun Bay, the porter again knocked on my door: "Don't miss all those ships" he said as we passed the layup fleet now numbering 260 vessels. How many will sail again? I wondered. At Benicia, between the east and westbound tracks, we passed the scrapyard where so many, many SP lightweight cars, including domes and Budd sleepers, had rolled their last mile. Today's "visitors" were baggage cars from the old "Holiday on Ice" shows. Right after SFZ crossed the Martinez bridge, the drawspan was lifted, halting an eastbound switching run. In the Martinez Ferry slip, the old Washington State Ferry "Willapa," was being refitted. Formerly the SP's "Fresno," she has come home to the bay to retire.

The afternoon wore on, and soon we were passing the new BART trainyards at Richmond; and I relived a thrill from 1959 when I first saw Cleveland rapid transit trains from a roomette on the Nickel Plate's old CITY OF CLEVELAND train.

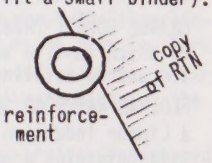
Into the Bay Area at last. Today the Bay region is a disappointment to me. It seems so much like failed promise wrapped in glamor and glitter. From corrupt utilities executives to the pornography kings and their tittering courts, the population collectively often seems to be behaving like so many doomed characters in the last chapters of an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel.

We rolled past the boarded-up Berkeley SP station, and past Shellmound tower, where red electric trains turned off in happier days for "Berkeley via Shattuck Avenue." Finally, at 4:07pm, one hour and two minutes late, SFZ comes to a halt at the Oakland 16th St. station. I have ridden the Overland train as far west as it will go. Now I'll spend time renewing old acquaintances and seeing some new sights before retreating northward.

A nine-car SFZ No. 5 pulls into Truckee on Oct. 29, 1973 with five engines, SP 6451 on the point. Photo by R. E. LeVart.

NOTE ON FILING COPIES OF RTN

A reader asks how copies of RTN could be stored in a binder without punching holes in them. Paul Rayton devised this simple solution, which we pass on to you: Get a package of gummed reinforcements, those doughnut-shaped reinforcements for binder paper, available at stationers, and attach them as in the diagram, one pair of reinforcements for each ring of your binder (the copies will fit a small binder). Place one reinforcement on the front cover, one on the rear, letting as much of the opening protrude over the edge of the newsletter as possible. The front reinforcement of each pair glues onto the rear reinforcement--that is, the portion of each that protrudes. This produces a durable loop thru which a binder ring can pass.



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Until Jan. 1, the yearly subscription rate is just six dollars for 24 issues by first class mail. Write: Message Media, Dept. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709

Urban-Suburban Transit

THE MOST CORRECTED (by sharp-eyed readers) error in our last issue was the wrong gauge of Toronto's streetcar tracks. The Canadian city's tracks are wide-gauge, 4 feet, 10 7/8 inches against the standard 4 feet, 8½ inches. The cars San Francisco obtained from Toronto are having their trucks narrowed. All eleven streetcars are expected to be in S.F. by the end of the year...

THE STREETCAR SEEMS to be well on its way to something of a renaissance. The latest city to call for their return is San Diego. A $1.3-billion plan, rivalling a $1.9-billion rapid transit plan proposed earlier, has just been presented, and will be decided upon next year. The streetcar system would be surface, elevated, and subway and would converge on the downtown area like the spokes of a wheel, with a bus network augmenting it. It would run as far south as the Mexican border...

HALF-PRICE SALE on transit is going on in New York. The city's MTA is offering roundtrip rides for normal one-way fares for five Sundays starting Dec. 16 to encourage ridership on "gasless Sundays" asked for by President Nixon...

TOLEDO'S BUS FARE is being cut from 40¢ to 25¢ for this month, an action made possible by a budget surplus...

LEADERS IN ARIZONA are calling for rail commuter service between Tucson and Phoenix and also between Tucson and Nogales. Amtrak will be asked to provide some service...

SOUTH SHORE LINE between Indiana points and Chicago is getting attention from the Chicago press. It's "amazing" that the line has survived so long, says the Daily News, using its 45-year old cars on the 90-mile route. Now the financially-burdened line is seeking solutions to its money problems. The state of Indiana is moving, but slowly, to form a transit authority that could assist. Chicago's Regional Transit Authority is unlikely to fund a line in another state. So Sen. Vance Hartke is asking Amtrak to take over South Shore operations and create the nation's first "high-speed rail minicorridor"...

A TRANSIT STRIKE began the first week of December in Pittsburgh with disastrous effects. Commuters total 330,000 in the affected area and downtown merchants reported business off 40-75%...

PORTLAND, OREGON HAS released a metropolitan transportation study which plays down the continued reliance on autos and freeways and envisions a 500% increase in transit usage (buses) by 1990...

ANOTHER FARE INCREASE on the SP commute line out of San Francisco takes effect on Dec. 17--a 10% rise. The last boost occurred Nov. 1...

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT of Transportation has consultants studying nine possible fast transit plans--none of them involving freeway construction--for the San Francisco-Stockton-Sacramento corridor. The plans outlined at a Dec. 11 meeting include use of TurboTrains on existing track, express buses, air-cushion vehicles, and extension of BART northward...

ORANGE COUNTY TRANSIT District in California is considering four transit plans, two of which involve buses or other use of freeway rights-of-way, and two of which call for use of existing Santa Fe and Pacific Electric rails...

FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION Nov. 29 awarded a "landmark contract" for testing a Linear Induction Motor to AiResearch Mfg. Co. of Torrance, Calif. The LIM permits obtaining propulsion by ground-reacting forces rather than thru interaction with wheels or axles which limit safe speeds...

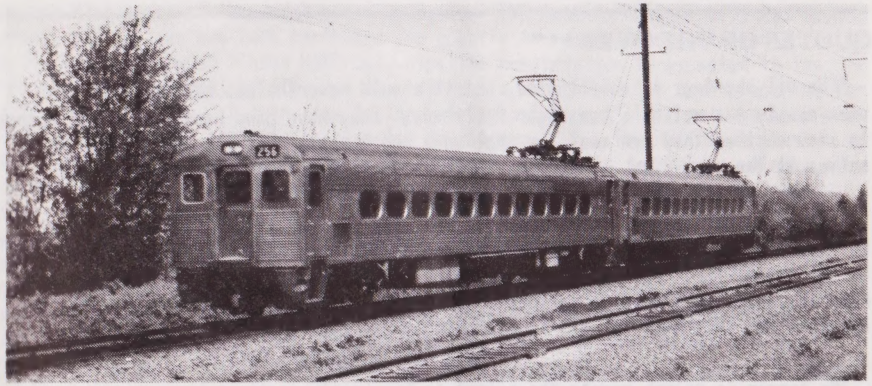
REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY for Chicago was created Dec. 1 with a state lottery to help finance it. It must be approved by voters next March 19...

THE SURPRISING FOOTBALL SPECIALS

by Henry Posner III

On December 1, having seen advertisements of special trains from Paoli and Trenton to the South Philadelphia Stadium for the Army-Navy Game, I rode from Princeton to Trenton with the intent of riding the Trenton special. Here was a once-a-year opportunity to travel some otherwise freight-only trackage as well as take a break from my studies.

The single-car MU shuttle down the 3-mile line to Princeton Junction was, of course, on time, as was the arrival of the 4-car Jersey Arrow from New York that was to take us to Trenton. Our progress was fine until we were stopped for 15 minutes outside the Trenton station due to a malfunctioning signal. Those passengers connecting on a regularly-scheduled local to Philadelphia missed their connection, and



A pair of Silverliners at Gap, Pennsylvania, photographed by Ken Maylath.

no more than 3 minutes after I had boarded the Stadium-bound train of 4 Silverliners we were off and running.

The ride in was mostly uneventful, with light crowds boarding at Levittown and Bristol. At North Philadelphia a huge crowd boarded, apparently connecting from the "regularly scheduled" Chestnut Hill local shown in the special trains' publicity. From Zoo Interlocking we used the freight-only High Line, bypassing the 30th St. station on an elevated trestle carrying us above the terminal's rather congested yards and approaches. As we continued onto the South Philadelphia freight line, I mused over how the football specials had declined from, at one time, 16 trains from New York alone, to today's two trains of Silverliners from the suburbs. My thoughts were considerably altered as we were held for a 15-car Stadium-bound train from Washington, drawn by two Amtrak GG-1's. This surprise (I had expected only the two Silverliner trains there) was the first of several for the day.

Following the Washington special into Stadium yard, I found another train from Washington already unloaded and the GG-1's in the process of being turned. Two specials from New York had arrived as well, and we were followed by about 10 Silverliners from Paoli and the seventh and final special, a GG-1-powered train from New York.

Both Washington trains had two Amtrak GG-1's apiece and consisted of about 15 cars, many of them in Amtrak colors. Seen was the private car "Lionelives" on one of the trains, and in Amtrak colors to boot.

The three New York trains were each powered by single PC black (Amtrak-renumbered) GG-1's, and were about the same length as the Washington trains. Many Amtrak cars were included in the consists, as well as a cut of MTA cars (conventional coaches) used on the ex-NYC commuter lines out of Grand Central. The final New York train carried on the rear the private car "Pennsylvania," in tuscan red. The car, based

in Philadelphia, was deadheaded to New York especially to return to Philadelphia on the special (albeit to the Stadium). The one occupant I talked with had no intention of seeing the game. Obviously those responsible for the move took being "mileage freaks" very seriously.

In general, the moves were handled with a precision quite surprising of the Penn Central. Every effort had been made to accommodate the specials, and the planning was obviously extensive. To muster such a concentration of trains for a single day surely rivals the General Motors Specials (see RTN, 10/16/72 and 11/20/72) for sheer magnitude. Seeing those seven trains pull out one after the other on 3-minute headways gave the impression that Amtrak and Penn Central can cooperate to provide service verging on the excellence of the eras preceding the 1960's.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"The oil shortage is an ill wind, but it should nevertheless blow good to some one--namely the nation's passenger railroads. They have been handed a golden chance to show whether they can meet the challenge and thereby help the country and themselves at the same time. Thus far, their response has been less than inspired."

--Chicago Tribune editorial, Nov. 29

"Amtrak is not going to show a profit, or even pay for itself for a long time. But American taxpayers may soon find it one of the most useful services subsidized by the tax dollar. Railroad passenger service, which both the public and the railroad companies were glad to relinquish a decade ago, may again become the best and cheapest way to travel for millions of Americans."

--Houston Post editorial, Dec. 4

"No longer is Amtrak merely the effort to keep rail passenger service alive. The hint of necessity lies behind the new legislation approved by Congress and signed by President Nixon. The fuel shortage underscores the point that the future may return the railway to a fundamental transportation system for people--not simply a fading option to the airplane, the car or the bus."

--Portland (OR) Journal editorial, Nov. 7

"For years, U.S. railroads have failed to provide the service to society that the system claims to do so well. Yet, the railroads have remained immune to the fundamental criticism: they fail because they are operated for profit. That railroads ought to be run under public ownership for the public good rather than for private profit is not a revolutionary idea."

--Barry Commoner in Harper's Magazine, December

"...the demonstrated renewal of interest in rail travel should give Amtrak real cause to push harder on its current studies of a plan to ferry family automobiles along with their owners to holiday destinations. ...The flow of tourist trade is heavy up and down the Pacific Coast. Auto-Train's successful East Coast operation should encourage Amtrak to try the same service here in an equally promising market with a San Francisco-Los Angeles service as the initial experiment."

--West Coast Hearst newspapers editorial, Dec. 2

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Amtrake reported that traffic on its major intercity trains out of New York was expected to be about normal for a Thanksgiving weekend."

--New York Times, Nov. 18

(There's no competence left in the world. The Times can't spell, and Amtrake can't make forecasts.)

mixed train of thoughts

LATE NEWS REPORT as we go to press: President Nixon will leave Dec. 26 for a week-long Florida vacation in a special car on the rear of an Amtrak train..... REMEMBER THE DEL MONTE? Members of the big tourist industry on California's Monterey Peninsula are calling for a revival of the San Francisco-Monterey train discontinued when Amtrak took over..... SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION Claude Brinegar awarded the Presidential Medal of Honor Nov. 29 to Ralph Franks, Jr., of Altamonte Springs, Florida, for saving a 2-year old child from an oncoming SCL passenger train on Sept. 7, 1971. He whisked the child away from a track while the train was only ten feet away. It was the 81st award of the medal since 1905..... THE ALASKA PIPELINE bill has been passed, and you can now look northward for greatly increased transportation activity. On the federally-owned Alaska Railroad, pipeline construction is expected to increase freight movement by 30%, and the railroad's management has been preparing for it for several years. A spur line to the Fairbanks Internat'l Airport has been completed. Air carrier activity is expected to increase 20%. The DOT has approved $4.4 million for airport development, including $2.3 million for Valdez, Alaska, the southern terminus of the Trans-Alaska pipeline. Actually, promoters want 3 pipelines, including one exclusively for the Defense Department..... THE STARTUP OF Amtrak's new Chicago-Dubuque train has been delayed by labor negotiations, and is indefinite at this time..... THE MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION of Railroad Passengers is proposing an energy crisis move of taxing gasoline with the proceeds to go toward upgrading tracks carrying Amtrak trains, so that all passenger trackage could support 100mph traffic..... TIME MAGAZINE REPORTED (Dec. 10) that Nevada Governor Mike O'Callaghan is trying to persuade Amtrak to inaugurate weekend trains between Los Angeles and Las Vegas to reduce the impact of the fuel shortage on the gaming palaces. A total of 65% of the visiting gamblers arrive by car, most from Calif.....

* * *

JAPAN'S PLAN FOR a greatly increased rail network, adding 12 fast lines to the one already in use and costing $21 billion, has run into some political opposition, the criticism being that the construction would fuel Japan's inflation..... SANTA CLAUS SPECIAL, the 31st annual train run by the Clinchfield Railroad in Kingsport, Tenn., operated on schedule early this month with its 90-year-old steam engine. It ran 93 miles between Kingsport and Elkhorn City, Kentucky..... ARCHITECTURAL FORUM MAGAZINE, in its current (Nov.) issue carries a 16-page, lavishly illustrated article on the use and preservation of railroad stations..... THE WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION of Railroad Passengers is soliciting new members at dues of $2 per year. Write WASHARP c/o Paul Phillips, West 444 21st, Spokane WA 99203 or C. R. Curjel, 2217 E. Newton, Seattle WA 98112..... THE GEORGE WASHINGTON, eastbound Amtrak train 50, hit an truck that fortunately had unloaded its cargo of bricks, in Manassas, VA Dec. 10. The truck driver was injured and the train engineer slightly. The train cut the truck in two at at unmarked crossing at 70mph, damaging the diesel unit slightly and delaying the Washington-bound train about 50 minutes..... AMTRAK NOW HAS, as of Dec. 7, 967 cars of which refurbishing has been completed and approved, and 76 others which have been refurbished but the work not yet given final approval. Amtrak says it has been using the seasonal lull between Thanksgiving and Christmas to get as many cars into and out of the shops as possible in preparation for the big winter travel rush..... CONGRESSMAN BROCK ADAMS of Washington is proposing electrification of 22,000 miles of high-density rail lines with federal funds..... THE ERIE LACKAWANNA says it has saved over a million gallons of diesel fuel since last June by shutting down diesel engines when they are not in use..... UTU PRESIDENT CHESSER has asked that congressional hearings be started on how the federal government could "revitalize" the railroads as a means of conserving energy.....

COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF Railroad Passengers has asked the Governor to develop a state plan for intercity rail passenger service in the state and to urge the Regional Transportation District to permit Rio Grande to inaugurate commuter service between Denver and Littleton..... A BOXCAR EXPLODED in Oxnard, CA Dec. 9, delaying the northbound COAST DAYLIGHT/STARLIGHT by 1½ hours due to slow orders. The car, on an SP train, was supposedly loaded with scrap, but apparently contained ammunition parts.... THAT GREYHOUND REPORT on p. 9 is in conflict with data just released from a University of Illinois study, which show that automobiles require 8900 BTUs (British Thermal Units) per passenger mile, buses 6000, but passenger trains only 4000..... TWO SNOW TRAINS, called the SIERRA SNOW SPECIALS, will run from Oakland, CA to Truckee Feb. 8 and 15, using Reno Fun Train equipment, Amtrak announced early this month. However, Amtrak officials are worried that fuel allocations may require elimination of such excursion trains in favor of regularly-scheduled service. However, Amtrak said, up to 6 cars could be added to the present SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR to take people to the ski resorts and keep them off the highway..... THE FREEDOM TRAIN, mentioned here earlier, to run around the nation in 1975 to honor the nation's 200th birthday, received a number of inquiries. We now have the info on where to write: The American Freedom Train Foundation, Box 1976, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10019. They take tax-deductible donations. Head of the foundation is Ross E. Rowland, Jr., who owns the High Iron Company..... AMTRAK IS SAID to be working over the former Pennsy KEYSTONE train consist in order to run it from Seattle to Spokane for the 1974 World's Fair as an "Exposition Flyer"..... DR. DAN MONAGHAN calculated that the TEXAS CHIEF, running between Ft. Worth and Houston, used 600 to 1000 gallons of fuel, depending upon wind and loading. "With 300 people and a 10-car train, this would figure out from a low of 94 to a high of 158 passenger miles per gallon, which no other mode can touch for efficiency"..... HERE'S A QUOTE from columnist Richard J. Needham in the Toronto Globe & Mail: "No matter how fast he travels or how far he goes, the motorist never actually leaves home: indeed no effort is spared to eliminate variety in the landscape, and to make famous beauty spots by mountain or sea into as close a counterpart of the familiar shopping centre as the original landscape will permit. In short, automobility has turned out to be the most static form of mobility that the mind of man has yet devised".....

* * *

CAN YOU IMAGINE SP voluntarily running a passenger train up a freight-only line--the line into Medford, Oregon in the Rogue River Valley--for a public relations move? Well, they did so on Nov. 27, bringing along an "Audubon" diner in which they fed Oregon officials while telling them the railroad could not reinstate passenger service there, but that Amtrak could. However, said SP, the speed limits would be awfully slow. Maybe this is a new tack--get Amtrak to upgrade the track for them, and they'll allow a passenger run..... SWEDEN AND DENMARK would be joined by a huge highway bridge and connecting tunnel, under a current plan, which is bringing environmentalists' criticism..... THE CHIEF OF the Washington State Patrol reported traffic fatalities had declined 43% on the state's highways since the 50mph speed limit took effect as a gas-saving measure. Auto collisions have declined some as a result of the lower speeds, but fatalities have been also substantially reduced in the slower-speed crashes still taking place..... HERE'S A MORE complete schedule for the FLORIDIAN effective Dec. 14: lv Chicago 8:30pm, ar Jacksonville 2:35am, lv Jacksonville 3:25am (via Ocala), ar Miami 11:10am (via Orlando), ar Tampa 9am, ar St. Pete 11am. Northbound, lv St. Pete 6pm, ar Tampa 7:30pm, ar Jacksonville 1am, lv Jacksonville 1:45am, ar Chicago 7am.....

ANNOUNCEMENT: Effective Jan. 1, 1974 the subscription rate of Rail Travel Newsletter will be increased from six to seven dollars yearly. Until then you can enter, renew or extend subscriptions at the old rate. Write: Message Media, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Express Ads

RAILROAD UNIFORM BUTTONS 50¢ each postpaid. Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Western Pacific, Northern Pacific, Key System, Denver and Salt Lake, Salt Lake and Utah, Pere Marquette, Monon and Rock Island. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens Street, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

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WANTED: PUBLIC TIMETABLES FOR MY PRIVATE COLLECTION. Need Pennsylvania Railroad form numbers 21, 42, 50, 51, 57, 59, 62, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 73, 74, 78, 81, 83, 88, 89, 90, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100. Any year. Also need Colorado Midland any year and T.H.&B. Coronation Issue 1954. Also Lehigh Valley Transit pre-1925, and all Reading forms pre-1930. Will buy or trade at owner's option. Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Rd., Holland, PA 18966. Phone 215-357-4570.

CHILDREN'S STORYBOOK about Rocky Mountain Narrow Gauge Railroading. 28 pages to color. "STEAMY" is a locomotive on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad between Colorado and New Mexico. Gives youngsters a feeling for railroading then and now. $1.75. Dave Ulmer, Jr., 1407 Holmes Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

1884 ROCK ISLAND TIMETABLE & SYSTEM MAP. An authentic reproduction, 18" x 38" printed on top quality paper. Only $1 ea. plus 25¢ per order handling & postage. Make check or M.O. payable to "Rock Island Lines" and send to: Public Relations Dept., Rock Island Lines, 139 W. Van Buren St., Chicago, IL 60605.

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Amtrak is running better equipment on the FLORIDIAN. That is a start, and autotrain is not the finish. Those improvements are just the easy ones. It's time to meet the great challenges of Amtrak: to provide better service, a nationwide rail service. Trains go through Birmingham and do not connect. Trains go past Birmingham Amtrak depot, but you need a taxi to go between their different stations. The founding Railpax Board had in mind that the Chicago-Birmingham-Florida service would go through the Florida State Capital at Tallahassee but FLORIDIAN does not. Amtrak came along later; Southern invented hospitality and prizes its control of service to passengers beyond price. Amtrak would defer then but Amtrak service would not, as Southern would be invited to run a Union Station in Birmingham. Nationwide rail service, California and Florida and points in between, via SUNSET-SOUTHERN CRESCENT and FLORIDIAN. One station in Birmingham. Florida connected to its State Capital, and its Capital connected to America by Amtrak, in cooperation with the finest in American Railroading. --Robert J. Swan, transit leadership - public transit catalyst, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801

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